

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A process control system capable of executing a process control function after initiation thereof, the process control system comprising:

a computer having a memory and a processing unit; and

a security module stored in the memory of the computer and adapted to be executed on the processing unit of the computer, wherein the security module analyzes security information that is collected from a user contemporaneously with the initiation of the process control function and in association therewith determines whether the process control function should be executed.

2. (Currently Amended) The security system of claim 1, wherein the process control system comprises a network and the process control function is initiated via a device external to the network.

3. (Original) The security system of claim 2, wherein the device includes a client that generates a user interface to collect the security information.

4. (Original) The security system of claim 3, wherein the client passes the security information in encrypted form to the security module.

5. (Currently Amended) The security system of claim 1, further comprising a process control application stored in the memory of the computer and adapted to be executed on the processing unit of the computer, wherein the process control application generates a security configuration interface for establishing a security parameter for the process control function executed by the process control system.

6. (Currently Amended) The security system of claim 5, wherein the security parameter comprises data representative of a lock associated with the process control function executed by the process control system.

7. (Currently Amended) The security system of claim 5, wherein the security parameter comprises data representative of whether execution of the process control function requires the security information to include a user identification and a password.

8. (Currently Amended) The security system of claim 5, wherein the security parameter comprises data representative of whether execution of the process control function requires the security information to include verification information.

9. (Original) The security system of claim 1, wherein the process control system comprises a network and the computer resides at a node of the network.

10. (Original) The security system of claim 1, further comprising a process control application stored in the memory of the computer and adapted to be executed on the processing unit of the computer, wherein the process control application generates a user interface to collect the security information from the user.

11. (Currently Amended) A method of securing a process control system capable of executing a process control function after initiation thereof, wherein the process control system includes a memory, the method comprising the steps of:

storing in the memory a security parameter associated with the process control function;

collecting security information from a user contemporaneously with the initiation of the process control function and in association with the process control function; and

determining whether to execute the process control function based on the collected security information and the stored security parameter.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein:

the process control system comprises a network comprising the memory; and

the security information collecting step comprises the step of communicating with a device external to the network.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 12, wherein the security information collecting step comprises the steps of generating a client resident in the device and providing a user interface using the client.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 12, wherein the security information collecting step comprises the step of passing the security information in encrypted form from the device to the network.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11, wherein the security parameter comprises data representative of whether execution of the process control function requires the security information to include a user identification and a password.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11, wherein the security parameters storing step comprises the step of generating a user interface for associating the process control function with a lock for which a user may be assigned a key.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11, wherein the security parameter comprises data representative of whether execution of the process control function requires the security information to include verification information.

18. (Currently Amended) A method of securing a process control system capable of execution of a process control function, the method comprising the steps of:

establishing a communication link between the process control system and a device external thereto to provide for remote initiation of the execution of the process control function;

generating a user interface via the communication link for collection of security information from a user contemporaneously with the remote initiation of the execution of the process control function; and

determining whether the remote initiation of the execution of the process control function is authorized based on the collected security information.

19. (Canceled).

20. (Currently Amended) A software system for a process control system capable of execution of a process control function, the software system comprising:

a computer-readable medium;

a first routine stored on the computer-readable medium that collects security information from a user contemporaneously with the initiation of the process control function and in association therewith; and

a second routine stored on the computer-readable medium that determines whether the execution of the process control function is authorized in accordance with the collected security information.

21. (Original) The software system of claim 20, wherein the first routine is executed in a client-server configuration such that the collected security information is transmitted from a client to a server.

22. (Original) The software system of claim 21, wherein the security information is collected via a user interface at the client.

23. (Original) The software system of claim 21, wherein the client is external to the process control system.

24. (Original) The software system of claim 21, further comprising a third routine that encrypts the collected security information prior to transmission from the client to the server.

25. (Currently Amended) The software system of claim 20, further comprising a configuration routine that establishes a security parameter for the process control function.

26. (Currently Amended) The software system of claim 25, wherein the security parameter comprises data representative of a lock associated with the process control function.

27. (Currently Amended) The software system of claim 25, wherein the security parameter comprises data representative of whether execution of the process control function requires the security information to include a user identification and a password.

28. (Currently Amended) The software system of claim 25, wherein the security parameter comprises data representative of whether execution of the process control function requires the security information to include verification information.

29. (Currently Amended) A software system for a process control system capable of execution of a process control function, the software system comprising:

a computer-readable medium;

a first routine stored on the computer-readable medium that establishes a communication link between the process control system and a device external thereto to provide for remote initiation of the execution of the process control function;

a second routine stored on the computer-readable medium that generates a user interface via the communication link for collection of security information from the user contemporaneously with the remote initiation of the execution of the process control function; and

a third routine stored on the computer-readable medium that determines whether the remote initiation of the execution of the process control function is authorized based on the collected security information.

30. (Canceled).

31. (Canceled).

32. (Original) The software system of claim 29, wherein the security information transmitted via the communication link is encrypted.

APPLICANTS' INTERVIEW SUMMARY RECORD

On November 10, 2005, Applicants' attorney Roger A. Heppermann conducted a telephonic interview with Examiner Courtney Fields and Examiner Emmanuel Moise in which claims 1-18, 20-29, and 32 were discussed. During that interview, Applicants' attorney explained that the claims as originally filed were intended to and should be interpreted as collecting security information from a user contemporaneously with initiation of a process control function, and that these claims were not intended to simply cover analyzing security information contemporaneously with the initiation of a process control function. Applicants' attorney proposed the amendments herein in order to further clarify this interpretation. The Examiners requested that the amendments be incorporated into a response and the Examiners appeared to indicate that the amendments would place the claims in allowable form. The Examiners' time and suggestions are greatly appreciated.

REMARKS

Claims 1-18, 20-29, and 32 are pending and at issue. Of these, claims 1, 11, 18, 20, and 29 are independent. Claims 19, 30, and 31 were previously canceled. Claim 1 is amended to refine the grammar of the claim to more specifically recite security information *that is* collected from a user contemporaneously with the initiation of a function. A similar grammatical refinement is made in claims 1, 11, 18, 20 and 29 to more distinctly indicate that the function that is capable of being executed by the process control system is a *process control* function. Dependent claims 2, 5-8, 15-17, and 25-28 are amended to conform with the independent claims.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of the pending claims as anticipated by He et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,088,451). As proposed during the Examiner interview, each of